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TAGS: AEMR AMGT ASEC PTER CASC BL
SUBJECT: EAC WORKING GROUP MEETING 9/18-CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Classified By: ADCM Mike Hammer for reasons 1.4 b,d

¶1. (S/NF) The Emergency Action Committee Working Group (EACWG, formed by agreement of EAC on 9/17) met 9/18 to discuss contingency planning for a low probability but high risk event: President Evo Morales is removed from power either by death or coup. EACWG core will consist of RSO, ORA, DEA, MGT, MILGP, and ECOPOL.

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Need to Update Evacuation/NEO Plan
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¶2. (S/NF) Post has a plan for a NEO evacuation that was updated in December 2007 in conjunction with RST/SOCOM. EACWG agreed that the SSAT team (arriving 9/19) should be asked to help develop an updated plan, including contingencies both for a permissive and non-permissive environment. Plan should look at alternate evacuation routes, safe havens, and rendezvous points, emphasizing the need for immediate reaction once a trigger event occurs. The country team's consolidated assessment is that the moment any action against Morales occurs, El Alto will mobilize and that we need a plan of action covering the first minutes and hours.

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Need for Immediate, Coordinated Response
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¶3. (S/NF) All present concurred that the USG would likely be blamed, by the government and MAS-aligned social groups, should anything happen to Morales. Despite our clear policy of no/no support for coups and our repeated public denials of any involvement in a conspiracy against Morales, his relentless media campaign assigning us blame for any actions by the opposition and portraying us as his enemy has set the stage so that if anything happens to him (even in an accident such as a crash of one of the Venezuelan helicopters he uses for transport) the USG will be viewed as the culprit. EACWG discussed need for immediate response and advance planning for such news: for example, any USG personnel working in El Alto at the moment that news of an action against Morales hit the radio would likely be in danger of mob violence. We therefor are developing a plan is that will address how to advise all personnel and what they should do, including communicating with the American school and private Amcits. Other likely flashpoints of mob violence in the event of an action against Morales are: Cochabamba, Potosi, Oruro, the Chapare-MAS strongholds.

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Danger Away from La Paz
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¶4. (S/NF) If something were to happen to opposition prefects, the violent reaction is more likely to be localized in the

affected department. An action against Costas, for example, could spark violence in Santa Cruz. (Note: Currently USG personnel have been relocated from Santa Cruz. End note.)

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Three Broad Contingencies:
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¶ 15. (S/NF) Contingency 1: Morales dead (by accident or assassination.) Succession occurs through he established constitutional order and Vice President Garcia Linera becomes president. Violent public reaction is certain, with demonstrations against USG and USG personnel highly likely. There will be some suspicion, however, within Masista circles that the Vice President was behind the event depending on the circumstances. Regardless, Post immediately considers Ordered Departure. Garcia Linera is likely to allow ordered departure, but the government might have trouble controlling the crowds. Difficult but permissive environment.

¶ 16. (S/NF) Contingency 2: Coup against Morales. Despite our constant refrain that the USG does not support a coup, chatter and rumors of coup plotting continue. Should one occur, Morales' El Alto supporters will react in force, blockading the city and probably attacking the Embassy, including entering the Zona Sur residential areas where almost all Embassy families live. While coup-leaders might be willing to allow USG personnel to leave on Ordered Departure, they will probably not be able to control El Alto. USG personnel forced to hunker down in the city. No access to El Alto airport.

¶ 17. (S/NF) Contingency 3: Auto-coup. Morales claims he is "forced" by MAS-aligned social groups to take over all powers. He will likely use rhetoric against USG to justify the action. Attacks on USG property likely. Unclear whether Morales would cooperate to allow permissive ordered departure.

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Initial Options Discussed
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¶ 18. (S/NF) EACWG discussed possible alternate sanctuaries such as the German club, the French school, and friendly embassies. Hunkering down in homes may be one of the best options, but many groups know where our homes are (street guards, taxi companies, domestic employees). EACWG agreed to wait for SSAT participation before getting into details.

¶ 19. (S/NF) Requests for SSAT Planning Team's Contingency Plan. Country team decided to request that the SSAT team, working with all mission elements, draft a contingency plan to address all three scenarios. Contingency plan should include:

--securing the Embassy and USG facilities,
--protecting USG personnel and families,
--alerting non-official Amcit community,
--hunkering down
--implementing ordered departure, if decided upon,
--executing a NEO.

¶ 10. (S/NF) EACWG will meet at 1400 on 9/19, with SSAT members, to continue planning.
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